

Beginning Educator Support Team Program

- **Improving retention**
 - **Increasing effectiveness**
 - **Developing instructional leadership**
-

Report to the Legislature



Randy I. Dorn
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

February 2011

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Beginning Educator Support Team Program (BEST)

- **Improving retention**
- **Increasing effectiveness**
- **Developing instructional leadership**

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the legislature regarding the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program implemented by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) per Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6444 (ESSB 6444), Section 513 (25). This report provides information and data collected from the first year of program implementation – the 2009-10 school year – and initial data for 2010-11. **However, funding for the BEST program was eliminated in the FY 2011 Supplemental Budget that was passed in December 2010. As a result, the program has been discontinued until further funding is available.**

ESSB 6444 required OSPI to award competitive grants to “5 to 15 school districts and/or regional consortia” in order to provide adequate funding for an effective level of support for beginning teachers.

By limiting the number of prospective recipients, the legislature addressed the funding challenge experienced by districts through the former Teacher Assistance Program (TAP), predecessor to BEST. Between 1987 and 2009, TAP per-teacher funding declined steadily until the allocation in FY 2009 was less than one-fifth of the actual cost to implement the directives of the legislation to provide effective support for novices. Because of the gap between funding and program requirements, districts had to supplement with funding from other sources (e.g. Title IIA, I-728, levy funds, etc.). Without adequate supplemental funding, some districts chose not to participate.

Based on research that demonstrates that “the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve at high levels is the quality of the teacher in the classroom” (Berry, 2004), BEST is designed to:

- Accelerate new teacher growth in instructional effectiveness.
- Keep novices invested in Washington’s public schools.
- Develop instructional leadership among veteran educators.

Toward those ends, BEST grantee districts and consortia are tasked with implementing the following research-based program components per ESSB 6444:

- Orientation for beginning teachers.
- Assignment of a qualified mentor.
- Development of a Professional Growth Plan for each beginning teacher aligned with Professional Certification (second-tier licensure) standards of performance.
- Release time for mentors and new teachers to work together.
- Teacher observation time with accomplished peers.

Professional development for mentors, also authorized by ESSB 6444, anchors this work and is accessible to all districts statewide. Developed and refined over the last

decade, OSPI offers the following program for experienced educators serving as instructional mentors for novices:

- OSPI Mentor Academy Series (I, II, and III).
- CSTP-OSPI Mentor-Coach Symposium.
- OSPI High Performance Mentoring Series:
 - ✓ Cultural Competence.
 - ✓ Using Data as a Catalyst for Teacher Growth.
- OSPI Leadership Roundtable Network (8 regional cohorts supporting nearly 300 instructional leaders statewide).

Though forward-thinking in its intent, this legislation has created a landscape of “haves” and “have nots” among school districts across Washington. New teachers fortunate enough to begin their careers in one of the 14 districts currently funded by BEST receive assistance to accelerate their instructional growth and to keep them invested in their school communities. Those in unfunded districts typically receive limited or no induction support.

Adequate support for all beginning teachers is essential because student achievement can be negatively impacted through assignment to inexperienced, unseasoned novices. Research indicates that “students who have a less proficient teacher during any given year may test as much as one year behind peers taught by a more effective teacher. Those unfortunate enough to have weak teachers for three or more years in a row may never catch up” (Sanders and Rivers, 2004; *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement*).

A high quality induction and mentoring program moves new teachers beyond mere survival to increasingly positive impacts on student learning. According to Dr. Anthony Villar of the New Teacher Center, University of California Santa Cruz, “the students of well-supported first year teachers demonstrate achievement gains equivalent to the students of fourth year veterans” who did not receive support.

Evidence of BEST Program Impact: Student Achievement

Even in the absence of a state data system connecting growth in student achievement to individual classroom teachers, the pattern of data collected by BEST grantee districts in their first year of implementation parallels the research findings of Dr. Villar. The following examples from BEST year-end district reports include measures of new teacher performance tied to student achievement.

- **Renton School District**
(14,322 students; 45.9 percent free and reduced price meals; 14.2 percent transitional bilingual)
Renton School District found a strong correlation between the mentored experiences of the district’s first and second year teachers and attributes of teaching that have been correlated to student achievement gains (from Classroom Observation Study by the BERC Group). In overall scores, the

teachers in years two and three of the mentor program out-performed the total population of Renton teachers.

- **Federal Way Public Schools**

(22,140 students; 47 percent free and reduced priced meals; 12.8 percent transitional bilingual)

In Federal Way Public Schools, analysis of the district's Gates-McGinite reading assessment administered in kindergarten through tenth grade revealed that the average of the scores of all novice teachers' students is comparable to the district average of students meeting standard in spring 2010 (74.07 percent compared to the district average of 74.12 percent). Novice teachers essentially matched the success of their experienced peers in a teaching context of 47 percent poverty and a 13 percent population of English language learners.

Significantly, 89 percent of first year teachers surveyed in May, 2010, reported that their mentors contributed to their instructional effectiveness to a moderate or great extent. Fully 81 percent indicated that the professional development they received contributed to their effectiveness as a teacher to a moderate or great extent.

Evidence of Impact: Retention

Washington continues to lose about 25 percent of its new teachers within the first five years of their careers (Plecki, et. al., UW, 2006). This figure has remained constant for the last decade, though the current recession will have an impact. New teachers are being hired in fewer numbers and they are typically the first to be let go when districts are forced to reduce staffing. While not as dire as the 50 percent attrition rate found in many parts of the country, 25 percent represents a significant loss to Washington's K-12 system. In October, 2010, BEST grantee districts reported 90 percent of all participating first and second year teachers are teaching in the same school or a different school in the same district. Eighty-four percent are teaching in the same schools in the same district. Less than one percent left teaching as a profession.

It is important to note that 100 percent retention is not a program goal. Some movement across professions is expected as individuals match their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and interests with well-chosen career paths. Some individuals will decide to leave for better-suited professions; others will not be rehired by districts due to performance concerns. While some attrition for a variety of causes is expected, the intent of BEST is to keep the most promising, proficient novices teaching in Washington's public schools.

According to Dr. Marge Plecki, et al, University of Washington, "it is just as disruptive for a teacher to move to a new school within the same district as it is to lose a teacher from the profession. 'Teacher movers' are as great a concern as 'teacher leavers.' The constant churn that some schools experience – often schools of poverty – makes it difficult for these schools to implement a coherent, multi-year improvement plan, as much of the expertise developed over the year walks out the

door each spring.” Therefore, retaining effective teachers at the school level from year to year is the critical measure of BEST program effectiveness.

Significantly, Grandview School District (3,532 students; 77.6 percent free and reduced priced meals; 29.5 percent transitional bilingual) notes, “We have retained all but 2 of 16 – or 87.5 percent – of all first and second year teachers in the district. Normally, we would retain about 70 percent of the staff that we hire in their first two years of employment. This is a positive trend.”

At this point, BEST grantee districts have established baseline retention data for their schools and will continue to monitor program effects in stemming movement between schools as well as attrition from Washington public schools and education as a profession.

Developing Instructional Leadership

A significant benefit of BEST is the development of key attributes of effective instructional leadership in veteran teachers serving as mentors. Mentors report experiencing professional rejuvenation, new learning, and enhanced professional practices as a result of their relationships with their protégés.

The following survey comments from BEST mentors are indicative of this effect:

“I am significantly more reflective about my job. I have many new windows on this profession and what it takes to be successful. I have new inspiration for personal growth and increased commitment to the profession as a whole. “

“My mentee’s enthusiasm and passion is inspirational and has helped me rekindle my excitement. It also made me more reflective about why I do the things I do which in turn has made me a stronger teacher.”

The following survey comments from new teachers demonstrate the positive effects of their relationships with their instructional mentors.

“Not only is my mentor attentive and helpful during observations, but he is always willing to help me plan using the newest teaching techniques. He also helps me prepare for state requirements and school administration observations. His support has been invaluable to me and I’m not sure what I would have done these first two years without him.”

“Words cannot describe how invaluable my mentor is to me. We discuss, evaluate, and debrief on assessment, engagement strategies, instructional strategies, differentiation, partnering with the parent community, behavior problems, classroom management, ways of preventing burn-out, standards, curriculum, scope and sequence, best practices, and ways to collect evidence for my Professional Growth Plan and professional development course. Whatever arises, my mentor is available to support me. My rapid growth as an effective educator in the last school year and a half would not have been possible without her.”

Recommendations:

1. Include beginning educator support for first and second year teachers in the state definition of Basic Education.

If the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve is the quality of the teacher in the classroom – as copious research demonstrates – then few things are more basic to Basic Education than development of a differentiated career continuum of teacher assessment integrated with adequate assistance. A key leverage point along this continuum is support for novices – assistance which moves them beyond mere survival to positive impacts on student learning. Investing in beginning educators helps them become as effective as possible as early as possible and continues to pay dividends over the course of their careers. The first years of a beginning teacher’s career are highly formative. An investment in first and second year teacher development affects the value-added trajectory of the teacher’s career and his or her impact on student learning for the next 25 to 30 years. New teacher induction has been funded by state budget proviso since 1987. It is time to recognize the integral nature of differentiated support for beginners in the fabric of K–12 education by including induction and mentoring for first and second year teachers in the definition of Basic Education.

2. Restore funding for BEST in the 2013-15 Biennium and expand the program.

Funding for the BEST program was eliminated in the FY 11 Supplemental Budget passed by the Legislature in December 2010. Once revenues increase, restoring funding for the BEST program should be considered a high priority. A recommended phase in schedule follows:

a. Restore funding for the original BEST grantee districts. This maintains previously developed capacities.

b. Phase in funding for all first year teachers working in high needs districts. This funding provides assistance for novices in schools of poverty which experience the highest rates of new teacher turnover and, therefore, the most disruption to the learning environment.

c. Phase in funding for all first year teachers in districts statewide and then add funding for all second year teachers.

This funding addresses the inequitable landscape, to this point, of “haves” and “have nots” – novices who begin their careers in funded

districts capable of providing support versus those who do not. Prior to the economic downturn, the Quality Education Council recommended phased-in funding for all first year teachers statewide beginning in FY 2011, and adding all second year teachers in FY 2012. State coffers clearly will not allow increased expenditures at this time.

3. Explore program efficiencies which might be achieved through the use of technology.

It is clear from research that effective forms of induction and mentoring support rely on face-to-face relationships. In many regionally isolated areas of the state, however, and in small districts with no role-alike peers, online resources can help respond to the unique needs of new teachers across the miles. It is not yet clear to what extent technological forms of assistance can be successfully implemented to accelerate instructional growth or retain a teacher working in a high needs area.

4. Establish standards and a process for Mentor Certification.

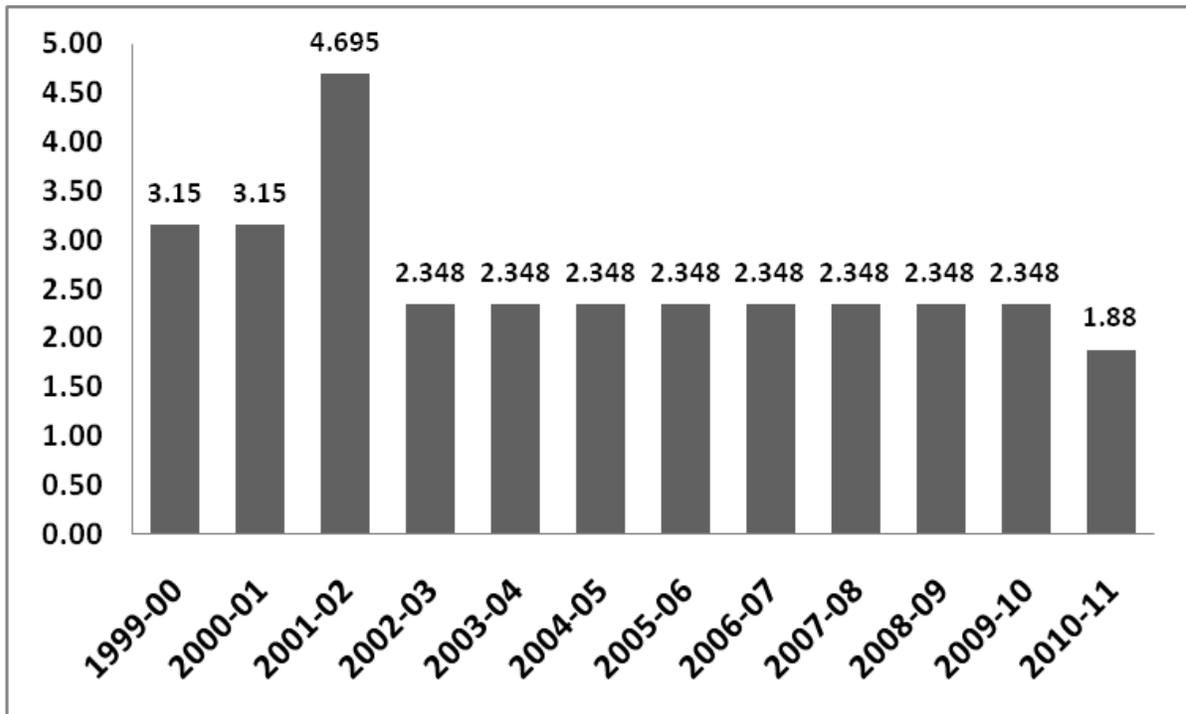
The focus would be acquisition and evidence-based demonstration of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required for positively impacting the instructional practices of beginning teachers. Mentor certification would develop instructional leadership and provide an alternative to the principalship for experienced educators interested in pursuing leadership roles. Alternative pathways for service in this capacity also are needed to support a differentiated system of compensation – one which recognizes the value-added contributions of teachers who develop unique knowledge and skill sets and assume higher levels of responsibility.

I. Issues and Insights: Support for New Teachers in Washington State

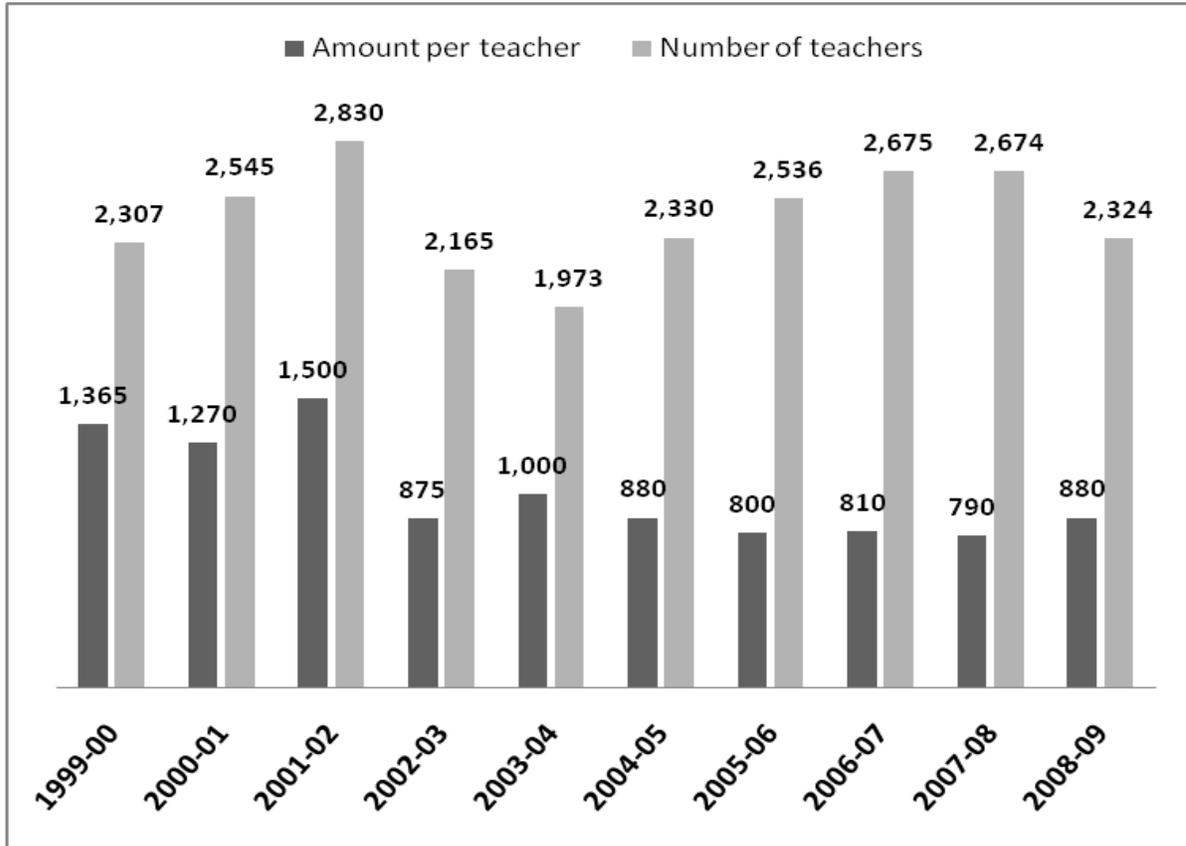
State Funding History

Funding for new teacher induction and mentoring was first provided by the legislature in 1987 through the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP). The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program was funded by the legislature in FY 2009-11 to establish adequate funding levels, effective program models, and efficient systems of delivery. During this period of program development, the legislature limited the number of funding recipients to “five to fifteen school districts and/or regional consortia.” This addressed the funding issue experienced with TAP which saw a steady increase in the number of new teachers and an appropriation that remained relatively constant over more than two decades (see graph). The amount provided per new teacher declined steadily until the allocation to districts in 2008-09 was just \$880. This amount was not sufficient for districts to carry out the directives of the TAP legislation, let alone offer effective induction programs. Magnified by the 20-year impact of the increased cost of living, the result was that some districts, unable to afford to meet the RCW criteria, did not even apply for funding. Many more districts were forced to supplement the state allocation from other unstable federal, state, and local funding sources (e.g. Title I, Title II, I-728, local levy funds, etc.) in order to provide effective programs. Still others were forced to assemble “patchwork” programs which fell short of the level and types of support that research indicates can make a difference in improving both teacher retention and student achievement (Strong, 2005; Villars and Strong, 2005 and 2007).

Appropriations for TAP and BEST, 1999-2011, in Millions



Variance in TAP Allocation Amount Per New Teacher, 1999-2009



Funding Challenges Continue

In 2009, the legislature retained the level of funding – \$2.348 million – provided annually for the Teacher Assistance Program since FY 2003. By reducing the number of potential recipients from all 295 school districts through TAP to “5 to 15 districts and/or regional consortia” through BEST, the intent was to raise the per-new-teacher funding allocation to adequate levels. In the proviso, \$250,000 was set aside for professional development for mentors accessible by school districts statewide.

With the economic downturn, district budgets and hiring became challenging to predict. From early July 2009, (when BEST grantee districts predicted their staffing needs) to October 1, 2009 (when final teacher counts were reported), requests for funding for the number of novices hired in BEST districts increased by an average of 27 percent. This reflected the need for most districts to reduce staffing in the spring and later their ability to rehire and add new staff by fall.

During the 2010 Session, the legislature reduced funding to BEST from \$2.348 million to \$2 million. Further across-the-board cuts in October 2010 eliminated an additional \$120,000, making the total reduction \$468,000 or 20 percent of the original 2009 budget proviso.

Correspondingly, program cuts were made in several areas between the program's inception in 2009 and October 2010:

1. Support for third year teachers and active candidates for Professional Certification was eliminated in order to preserve adequate support for first and second year teacher induction program components.
2. Across-the-board state cuts in October 2010, reduced overall funding to BEST grantee districts.
3. Cuts were made to state professional development course offerings for mentors. This impacted the breadth, depth, and accessibility of important regional and statewide options. Eliminated from the calendar were two 4-day OSPI Mentor Academy I sessions previously scheduled for June 2011, and courses focusing on cultural competence and the use of data as a catalyst for teacher growth. These cuts impact other agency work designed to close achievement and opportunity gaps in schools of poverty and diversity.

Following are figures for the 2009-11 biennium for BEST and the corresponding figures for TAP between FY 1987 and FY 2009.

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program

Fiscal Year	1 st Year Teachers	Amt. per Teacher	2 nd Year Teachers	Amt. per Teacher	3 rd Year Teachers	Amt. per Teacher	ProCert Candidates	Amt. per Candidate
FY 11	286	\$3,500	192	\$2,100	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 10	197	\$5,000	316	\$3,000	384	\$500	485	\$500

Teacher Assistance Program (TAP)

Fiscal Year	No. of Beginners Participating	Amount per Beginner
FY 09	2,314	\$880
FY 08	2,674	\$790
FY 07	2,675	\$810
FY 06	2,536	\$800
FY 05	2,330	\$880
FY 04	1,973	\$1,000
FY 03	2,165	\$875
FY 02	2,830 ¹	\$1,500
FY 01	2,545	\$1,270
FY 00	2,307	\$1,365
FY 99	1,842	\$708
FY 98	1,667	\$782
FY 97	1,527	\$854
FY 96	1,146	\$1,138
FY 95	977	varied
FY 94	915	\$1,780
FY 93	498	\$1,780
FY 92	563	\$1,780
FY 91	unknown	\$1,780
FY 90	987	\$1,780
FY 89	688	\$1,700
FY 88	859	\$2,100
FY 87	689	\$1,700

¹An additional 145 teachers were added at the half-year point at \$700 per teacher.

A System of “Haves” and “Have Nots”

It is important to note that new teacher support in Washington is currently a system of “haves” and “have nots.” BEST was able to fund only 5 applications from 48 representing more than \$10 million in requests from 186 districts. While professional development for mentors is available to all districts, their ability to take advantage of this resource varies despite BEST program attempts to address potential barriers (e.g. substitute reimbursement, low and no-fee registration, regional availability, etc.). Due to lack of funding, many districts have had to reduce, reassign and/or eliminate mentor positions. This negatively impacts the significant human capacity and infrastructure these districts developed through the former Teacher Assistance Program over the last two decades.

The Quality Education Council has recommended phased-in, statewide implementation of BEST for all first, second, and third year teachers beginning in 2011 if the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program demonstrates positive impacts.

This is important because Washington continues to lose about 25 percent of its new teachers within the first five years of their careers (Plecki, et al, 2006). This figure has remained constant for the last decade. This represents a significant loss to the K–12 system. High-poverty, low-performing schools are likely to have higher turnover than their wealthier, higher-performing counterparts. The constant churn these schools experience makes it difficult for staff to embark on a coherent, multi-year improvement plan, as much of the expertise developed walks out the door each spring. Relationships with students – a key to student motivation, engagement, and student achievement – are also sacrificed (Plecki). The estimate of the actual cost of replacing a teacher lost to attrition is about \$45,000.

In addition to retaining teachers in greater numbers in our schools and in education, research indicates that the students of well-supported first year teachers demonstrate achievement gains equivalent to fourth year veterans (Villars, Strong, 2006). These gains in student learning are the promise of a fully funded Beginning Educator Support Team program.

II. Responding with Vision

The legislature replaced the former Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) with funding for new teacher induction and mentoring through BEST in 2009-11 biennium. BEST currently provides funding for the professional induction of first and second year teachers in 14 school districts, including two regional consortia.

Program Goals

The purpose of the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program is to:

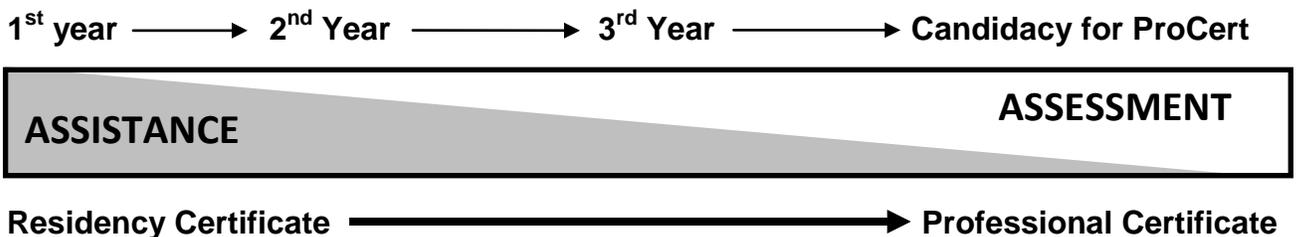
- Accelerate the instructional effectiveness of first and second year teachers.
- Improve teacher retention in Washington's public schools.
- Develop instructional leadership among experienced, veteran educators.

To accomplish these aims, BEST provides:

- Competitive grant funding to school districts and regional consortia.
- Professional development for instructional mentors throughout Washington.

Assistance v. Assessment

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grants are competitively awarded to school districts and regional consortia to provide induction and mentoring support for early career teachers – first year through candidacy for Professional Certification. The chart below illustrates the relationship between “assistance” versus “assessment” – nurture versus accountability – provided in a continuum of support aligned with state standards for Professional Certification. There is a constant and necessary tension between these two characteristics of the work of mentors and other instructional growth agents. Mentors must be versed in adult learning theory, stages of professional development (Berliner), observation strategies, cognitive coaching, and forms of feedback designed to stretch novice thinking while helping beginners maintain their sense of self-efficacy. The role of mentors is not to “fix” the new teacher, but rather to maintain his or her engagement and investment in developmentally appropriate levels of self-reflective, personalized professional growth. It is expected that increasing levels of competence will be achieved over time, requiring a diminishing level of mentoring and other forms of induction assistance. Yearly evaluations by the principal provide a gauge for progress toward performance standards required for second-tier state licensure (professional certification).



Support for Novices in BEST Grantee Districts

- **Orientation** to school and district culture, and professional expectations.
- **Mentoring** from a rigorously selected, well-trained, highly skilled colleague.
- **Release time for observations** by mentors to provide formative feedback to mentees, and for mentee observations of exemplary peers.
- **Professional development for beginning teachers** on topics relevant to their unique needs (e.g. classroom management, assessment for learning, tailoring instruction to individual learners, etc.).
- **Assistance in developing a plan for professional growth** which functions as a personalized “roadmap” to Professional Certification.

III. Standards of Effective Support for New Teachers

State standards for new teacher induction were developed in 2005 by a group of Washington educators convened by OSPI in partnership with Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) funded by a grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. These standards were revised in 2008 by a second team of educators to reflect later research and new findings.

Core Beliefs about Induction

From this research and dialogue emerged four new foundational beliefs that are recognized as essential to Washington State's efforts to provide high-quality support for beginning teachers.

- Effective support for beginning teachers requires **collective responsibility**. To affect both teacher and student performance, educators, leaders and legislators must craft, fund, and manage a comprehensive and coherent system.
- A high-quality system of support for beginning teachers is the **foundation of career-long professional growth** – From preservice preparation to Residency Certification to Professional Certification, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification, degree programs and other examples of continuous learning.
- Serving the needs of beginning teachers is a **core element of school improvement**. Increasing the stability and expertise of the teaching corps, especially in schools with challenging student populations, can help to ensure all students experience the high-quality teaching they deserve.
- **School culture** significantly affects beginning teachers' experiences and development. It can nurture or negate a beginning teacher's passion for the profession and can support or inhibit the acquisition of the skills and knowledge needed for proficiency (Johnson, 2004).

Washington State Induction Standards: A Synopsis

Hiring

Hiring is the process of analyzing employment needs, providing an information-rich recruiting and selection process and using a shared decision-making process to place teachers in assignments appropriate to their experience and needs. Students, schools, and districts are well-served by hiring policies and practices that honor the unique needs and powerful potential of beginning teachers.

Orientation

Orientation is the integration of new teachers into the school system. Orientation activities are designed to introduce new teachers to their district, school, and colleagues – and to the tools and resources needed to be successful. New teachers

benefit from participation in an orientation to the school and district beliefs and practices – both before their teaching responsibilities begin and continuing throughout the year.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the working relationship established between novice teachers and experienced teachers. The primary focus of this relationship is to strengthen the new teacher’s understanding and initial application of subject area content, instructional practices, school processes, and management strategies. A strong relationship with a highly qualified mentor is essential to facilitating maximum growth in new teachers.

Professional Development

Professional Development means providing intentional and coordinated opportunities for new teachers to grow professionally in both knowledge and application of current instructional best practices. New teachers benefit from purposeful, on-going, formal and informal job-embedded learning opportunities that promise reflection, collaboration, and professional growth.

Assessment for Teacher Growth

Assessment for Teacher Growth refers to the formal and informal processes whereby teachers improve their instruction. These processes include continuous self-reflection, examination of evidence of student learning, and mentor and supervisor feedback. New teachers benefit when districts have a carefully developed, collaborative assessment system focused on improving teaching practice and enhancing student achievement.

The complete standards document, *Effective Support for New Teachers in Washington: State Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction*, is available on the OSPI website at www.k12.wa.us/BEST.

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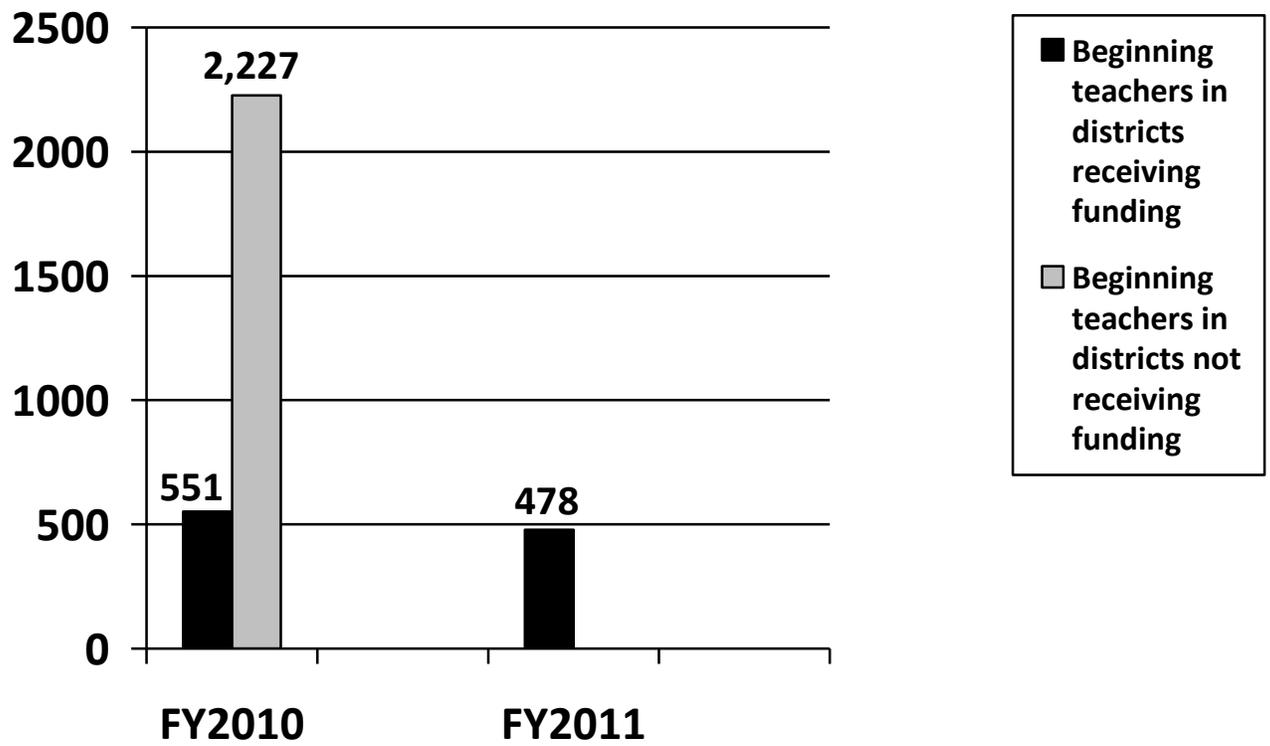
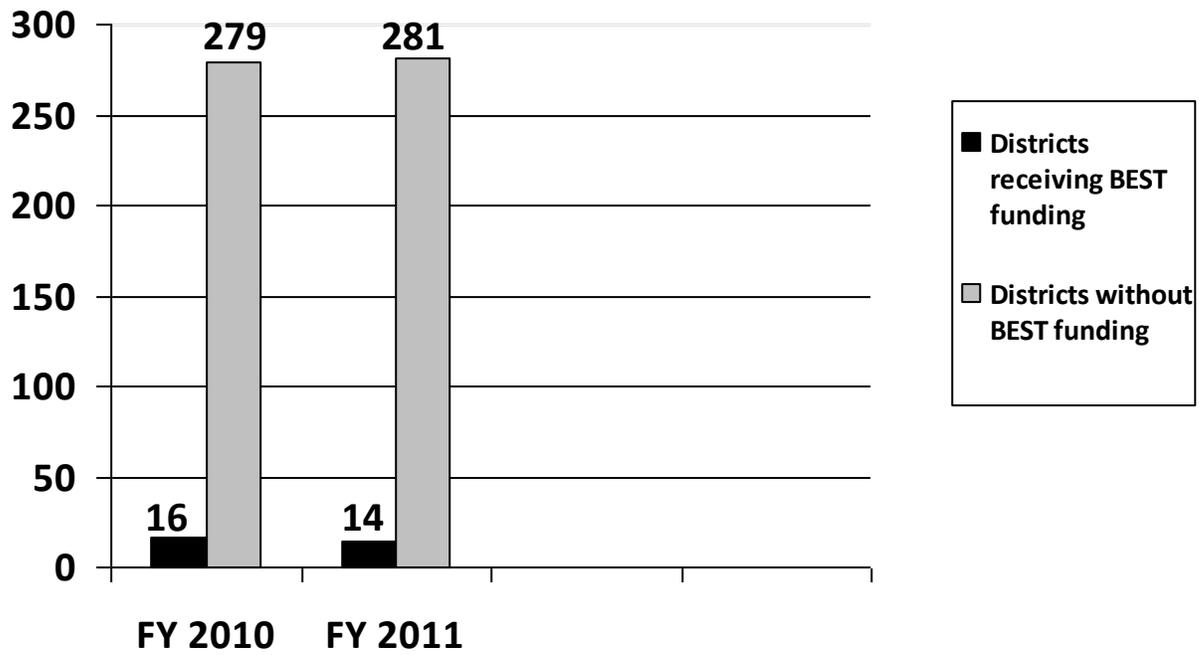
IV. Program Implementation

Selection of BEST Grantees

To qualify for consideration for competitive BEST grant funding, proposals were rated on alignment with Washington State standards for new teacher induction; alignment with Professional Certification standards for effective instruction; and the program’s ability to provide the following:

- Assistance by rigorously selected, well-trained mentor teachers for first, second, and third year teachers and facilitated support for active Professional Certification candidates.
- Compensation for mentors.
- Continuing professional development for mentors, including training in observation skills and professional growth planning.
- Professional development designed to meet the needs of beginning teachers, including an orientation; individualized assistance prior to the start of school to prepare them for the beginning of the school year, classroom management, curriculum and instruction, assessment, communication skills, professional conduct; instructional planning, and cultural competency/working with diverse learners.
- Release time for mentors to observe their mentees, and for mentees to observe exemplary peers.
- Assistance for mentees in the development and implementation of a Professional Growth Plan aligned with standards for Professional Certification.
- Data collection and analysis to assess program effectiveness and to inform continuous improvement.

Beginning Educator Support Team Program	FY 2010	%	FY 2011	percent
Districts receiving BEST funding	16	5.4 %	14	4.7%
Districts without BEST funding	279	94.6%	281	95.3%
Number of beginning teachers in districts receiving funding through BEST (1st and 2nd year)	551	19.8%	478	Not yet available
Number of beginning teachers in districts receiving no funding through BEST (1st and 2nd year)	2,227	80.2%	Not yet available	Not yet available



FY 2010 BEST Grantees

Federal Way Public Schools **\$499,000**

1st year teachers: 44
2nd year teachers: 67
3rd year teachers: 81
ProCert candidates: 75

Lake Washington School District **\$382,200**

1st year: 55
2nd year: 72
3rd year: 77
ProCert: 70

Renton School District **\$196,875**

1st year: 36
2nd year: 49
3rd year: 50
ProCert: 45

ESD 112 BEST Consortium **\$510,000**

1st year: 55
2nd year: 115
3rd year: 144
ProCert: 28

Consortium Districts:

Battle Ground School District
Camas School District
Evergreen Public Schools
Hockinson School District
Kalama School District
Stevenson-Carson School District
Trout Lake School District
Washougal School District

Lower Valley BEST Consortium **\$211,050**

1st year: 17
2nd year: 41
3rd year: 32
ProCert: 48

Consortium Districts:

Grandview School District
Toppenish School District
Wapato School District
Zillah School District

FY 2011 BEST Grantees

Federal Way Public Schools **\$316,400**

1st year teachers: 61
2nd year teachers: 49

Lake Washington School District **\$326,900**

1st year: 61
2nd year: 54

Renton School District **\$175,700**

1st year: 31
2nd year: 32

Educational Service District 112, Vancouver **\$420,000**

1st year: 96
2nd year: 40

Consortium Districts:
Battle Ground School District
Camas School District
Evergreen Public Schools
Hockinson School District
Kalama School District
Washougal School District

Lower Valley Consortium **\$165,200**

1st year: 37
2nd year: 17

Consortium Districts:
Grandview School District
Toppenish School District
Wapato School District
Zillah School District

Models of Support

Three models for the delivery of induction and mentoring support have been implemented through BEST:

- **Individual School District Model**

A single school district receives funding to develop an internally delivered induction program for its beginning teachers.

Advantages: Program design is tailored to the needs and initiatives of the particular school district. The district is able to customize professional development offerings for beginning teachers and mentors to its specific curricula and the unique needs of its student population and community. Full-time positions are established and maintained for district mentors who continue to learn and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to their roles as instructional growth agents. Research demonstrates the developmental nature of mentor growth and the increased effectiveness of these veterans in enhancing the instructional proficiency of beginners. The individual school district model is optimal for districts large enough to maintain it with consistency over time.

- **District-Led Regional Consortium Model**

Two or more districts collaborate in the development and delivery of induction support to their beginning teachers. One district serves as the fiscal agent for the consortium.

Advantages: This model allows districts with smaller numbers of beginning teachers to collaborate in providing some components of effective induction, including instructional mentoring (cognitive coaching) and professional development for beginning teachers. The consortium is able to maintain the human capacity and infrastructure it has developed even though the number of new hires in individual districts may fluctuate from year to year. Districts which are too small to carry the expense of a comprehensive induction program are able to meet the unique needs of their novices by accessing consortium resources. District-led regional consortia can be “organically” established in that districts self-identify their partners based on their common needs, characteristics, and relative proximity.

- **ESD-Led Regional Consortium**

An educational service district (ESD) serves as the lead for two or more districts within its service region in the development and delivery of induction support for beginning teachers. The ESD serves as the fiscal agent for the consortium.

Advantages: This model provides a “hub” for service delivery within a large geographic region which can support the needs of small districts separated by distance. From year to year, the consortium can maintain the human capacity and infrastructure it has developed. Small and large districts benefit from partnering with the regional ESD to provide for common needs, instructional mentoring (for beginning teachers in all small districts) and

professional development for beginning teachers. Larger districts in this model may choose to develop their own mentoring capacity and provide this support internally.

Disadvantages: Involving a number of districts in this consortium model limits the amount of local input and program control which can be exercised by each district within the consortium. This impacts the ability of individual districts to address with new staff the unique needs of their students, district-specific curricula and instructional practices, community culture, etc. Communication among many stakeholders, separated by distance, regarding key components and program variables is also challenging.

Recommendation: Further study of this model is needed before it can be recommended as a viable system of effective induction support.

V. Program Evaluation

Information and data were collected for the following purposes:

- OSPI monitoring of grantee implementation of required program components.
- Documentation of district progress toward program goals.
- Articulation of district steps toward continuing improvement.
- BEST program evaluation as required by the legislature.

The following instruments, processes, and timeline were used:

February 2010: Mid-Year Surveys

- First Year Teachers
- Second Year Teachers
- Mentors

March 22, 2010: BEST Grantee Think Tank, SeaTac

Teams (program coordinators/administrators/mentors) met to review and analyze disaggregated mid-year survey data by district; to share successes and challenges; and to plan program improvements.

June 2010: End-of-Year Surveys

- First Year Teachers
- Second Year Teachers
- Mentors
- Principals/Site Administrators

June 30, 2010: End-of-Year Reports by District

October 1, 2010: Report from ESD 112 and Retention Reports by District

- Current year status of all first and second year teachers supported by BEST in 2009-10.

During the 2010-11 school year, New Teacher Center, University of California Santa Cruz, has been contracted to conduct surveys of first and second year teachers, mentors, and site administrators in October, February, and May for the purpose of independent data collection, analysis, and program evaluation. New Teacher Center is nationally recognized for its research and program development in the field of novice teacher induction.

VI. Evidence of Impact: Improvement of Instruction

Absent a state data system connecting student achievement data to individual classroom teachers, BEST grantees have grappled with efficient means of collecting sufficient data from which to draw meaningful conclusions. However, the pattern of various data collected independently by BEST grantee districts parallels the research findings of Dr. Anthony Villar, et al., New Teacher Center, University of California Santa Cruz, 2004. The pattern which emerged in various NTC studies indicates that a high quality program of induction and mentoring moves new teachers beyond mere survival to increasingly positive impacts on student learning. In the 2004 study by Villar, he observed that “the students of well-supported first year teachers demonstrate achievement gains equivalent to the students of fourth year veterans.”

Consistent with this NTC finding are the following excerpts from data and information reported by BEST grantee districts at the end of the first year of program implementation.

Camas School District

(5,832 students; 21.9 percent Free and Reduced Price Meals; 1.6 percent Transitional Bilingual)

At 5th grade, the MSP (Measurement of Student Progress) in reading in BEST mentee classrooms was 83.1 percent, while the overall district reading score was 85 percent. Most impressive was the 3rd grade comparison. **The Camas overall reading MSP score at 3rd grade was 85.2 percent while the third grade team at Dorothy Fox Elementary which includes a BEST mentee, scored well above the district average at 94.7 percent.**

Federal Way Public Schools

(22,140 students; 47 percent FRPM; 12.8 percent Transitional Bilingual)

Analysis of the district’s Gates-McGinitie reading assessment administered in kindergarten through 10th grade revealed that **“the average of scores of all novice teachers’ students is comparable to the district average of students meeting standard in spring, 2010: 74.07 percent compared to the district average of 74.12 percent .”**

“Novice teachers have met or surpassed the (overall) percentage of students meeting standard during the last three years. Novice teachers are matching the success of experienced teachers in our district while having an average of 47 percent of students at the poverty level and approximately 13 percent English language learners (ELL).”

Lake Washington School District

(24,271 students; 13.9 percent FRPM; 4.9 percent Transitional Bilingual)

“We used DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) which is an early literacy screening instrument that helps monitor reading progress in primary grades. There are three progress monitoring periods in the year and at each

Lake Washington School District (continued)

period the benchmark levels are increased to account for expected growth in reading.

We analyzed data for 26 first and second year teachers in grades K-2 and compared their results to their building grade level teams and also to all teachers in the district at their grade level. Each time a teacher administers the DIBELS test, his or her students are placed in one of three categories: Intensive, Strategic or Benchmark. The data shows the teachers' ability to move or not move students forward in their early literacy skills. A teacher who is able to move a student forward to the next level is accelerating the growth of struggling students beyond expected levels. We analyzed this data in three different ways:

Comparison to Building Grade Level Teams

Teachers were determined to be below, equivalent or above other teachers at their grade level in their buildings by comparing movement forward of Intensive and Strategic students as well as the ability to maintain Benchmark students.

- **Kindergarten** (eleven 1st and 2nd year teachers):
Four were below, five were equivalent, and two were above the progress of their colleagues.
- **First Grade** (nine 1st and 2nd year teachers):
None were below, eight were equivalent, and one was above the progress of their colleagues.
- **Second Grade** (six 1st and 2nd year teachers):
Two were below, four were equivalent, and none were above the progress of their colleagues.

Comparison to Entire District Grade Level Teachers

For this comparison we looked at the number of students who at the beginning of the year were placed at the Intensive or Strategic level and how many of them were moved forward to the next level by the end of the year. We compared the cohort of first and second year teachers' ability to move students forward to the ability of teachers in the entire district at that grade level.

- **Kindergarten**
 - Intensive: 38 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 50 percent (district)
 - Strategic: 67 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 72 percent (district)
- **First Grade**
 - Intensive: 60 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 50 percent (district)
 - Strategic: 20 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 47 percent (district)

Lake Washington School District (continued)

▪ **Second Grade**

- Intensive: 12 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 20 percent (district)
- Strategic: 41 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 39 percent (district)

Comparison of All First and Second Year Teachers Administering DIBELS to District

In this comparison, instead of looking at individual grade levels we grouped the entire cohort of first and second year teachers together and compared them to all K–2 teachers who administered DIBELS.

- Intensive: 38 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 46 percent (district)
- Strategic: 50 percent movement (1st/2nd yr) compared to 56 percent (district)

As a group, mentored first and second year teachers performed only slightly below their experienced colleagues in working with struggling readers. This is an impressive statistic because national data collection shows unsupported first-third year teachers lag significantly below their experienced colleagues in student achievement. Supported teacher's students show a much more favorable comparison. It should be noted that our supported new teachers accelerated the reading score growth of 40 percent of those students who struggle the most. They were able to move them to standard or significantly closer to standard. Our new teachers were also able to help 50 percent of students reading slightly below standard reach benchmark.

Renton School District

(14,322 students; 45.9 percent FRPM; 14.2 percent Transitional Bilingual)

In order to understand the changes in instructional practice that occurred as a result of Renton's BEST program, the Renton School District consulted with The BERC Group. As a part of Renton's district improvement process the BERC Group conducted a classroom observation study of every classroom in the district. Teachers were observed for attributes of Powerful Teaching and Learning in a 30-minute classroom observation. Indicators of Powerful Teaching and Learning have been researched and correlated to higher levels of student achievement than classrooms that do not exhibit these characteristics. In other words, in classrooms where these attributes are observed, student achievement gains follow. Thousands of classrooms in Washington State have been studied. Data from Renton's Classroom Observation Study were extracted to show the difference between teachers who had been mentored by well-trained BEST mentors and more experienced teachers who had not been mentored in their early years of teaching. **The mean scores for second year teachers who had been mentored for two years by a Renton BEST mentor are higher for every Essential Component of Powerful Teaching and Learning and for the overall score compared to first year teachers. In overall scores, the teachers in years two and three of the mentor program out-performed the total population of**

Renton School District (continued)

Renton teachers. These findings demonstrate a strong correlation between the mentored experiences of Renton's first and second year teachers and attributes of teaching that have been correlated to student achievement gains. Those teachers who had been mentored for two or three years showed the greatest gains in these attributes of teaching.

Further, a case study – *One Teacher's Story*, demonstrates how **focused mentoring from a knowledgeable and skilled mentor using data to drive instructional improvement positively impacts student achievement.** Using DIBELS as the measure of reading fluency, this case study directly ties improved student outcomes in reading to the mentoring the novice teacher received. Average gains in fluency scores of students in the classrooms of novice teachers are 6.8 percent. Overall district average gains for students in the classrooms of experienced teachers are 7 percent. One might expect that the growth gains in the classrooms of novice teachers would be significantly below that of experienced teachers because of their inexperience. **This case study indicates that with skilled mentor support, novice teachers can demonstrate virtually the same gains in student learning as their more experienced colleagues – an unusual occurrence unless there is focused instructional support.**

The BERG Group Classroom Observation Study as well as emerging student achievement data in reading fluency (DIBELS), points to a positive correlation between early career support through the BEST program and student achievement. The data indicates that our theory of action that incorporates one-to-one mentoring with a focus on building professional cultures of collaboration, while simultaneously building the leadership capacity of a large number of teacher leaders, is paying off.

Washougal School District

(2,999 students; 38.2 percent FRPL; 1.7 percent Transitional Bilingual)

“It was noted in our district that, though we have previously provided mentors through our (former) TAP program, participation in the ESD 112 BEST Consortium, with its varied and extremely high-quality professional development programs as well as its cross-system collaboration, **allowed us to take mentoring new teacher growth to new levels. Our principals reported that our new teachers, for the most part, were more reflective and more engaged in their PGPs (Professional Growth Plans) than in prior years.**”

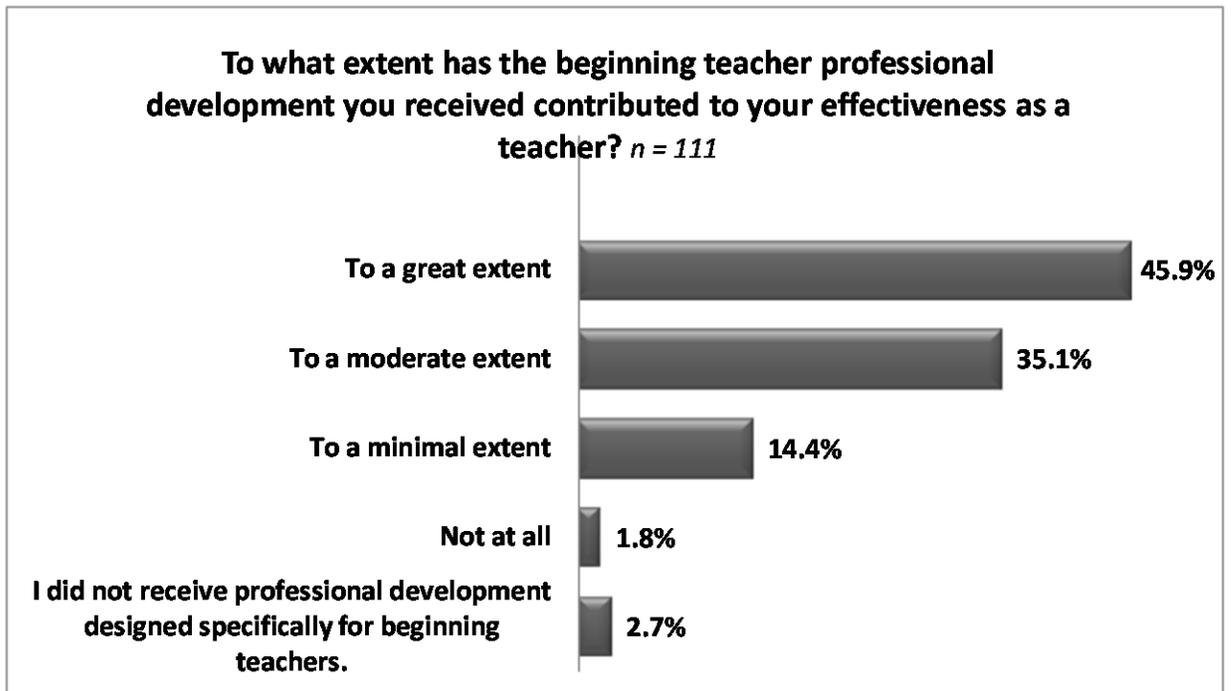
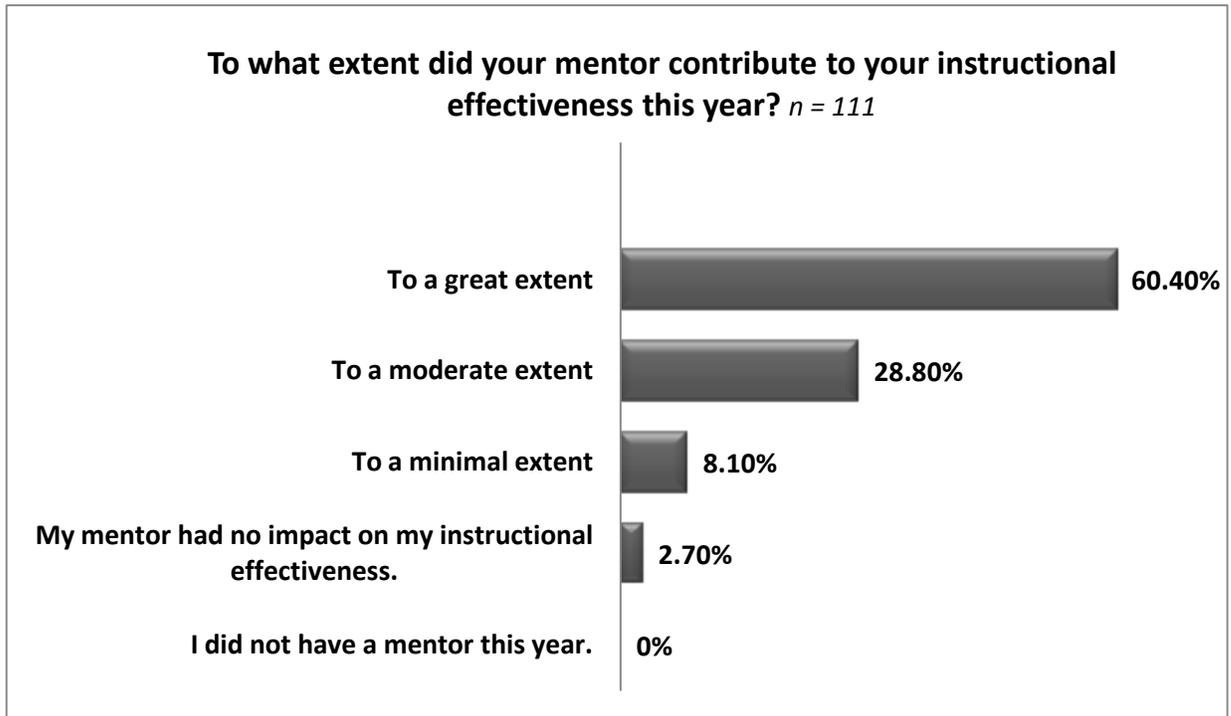
The following comment from Washougal School District echoes the experience and intent of all BEST grantee districts at this point in program implementation: “As we gather and sort achievement data in the fall of 2010, it will allow us to compare achievement data and self-perception data that should create a more comprehensive picture of growth for the first year of our teacher induction program.”

At this point, all BEST grantee districts have collected various forms of assessment data from 2009-10 as available and appropriate to the task of program evaluation. This will serve as a baseline for comparison with 2010-11 results.

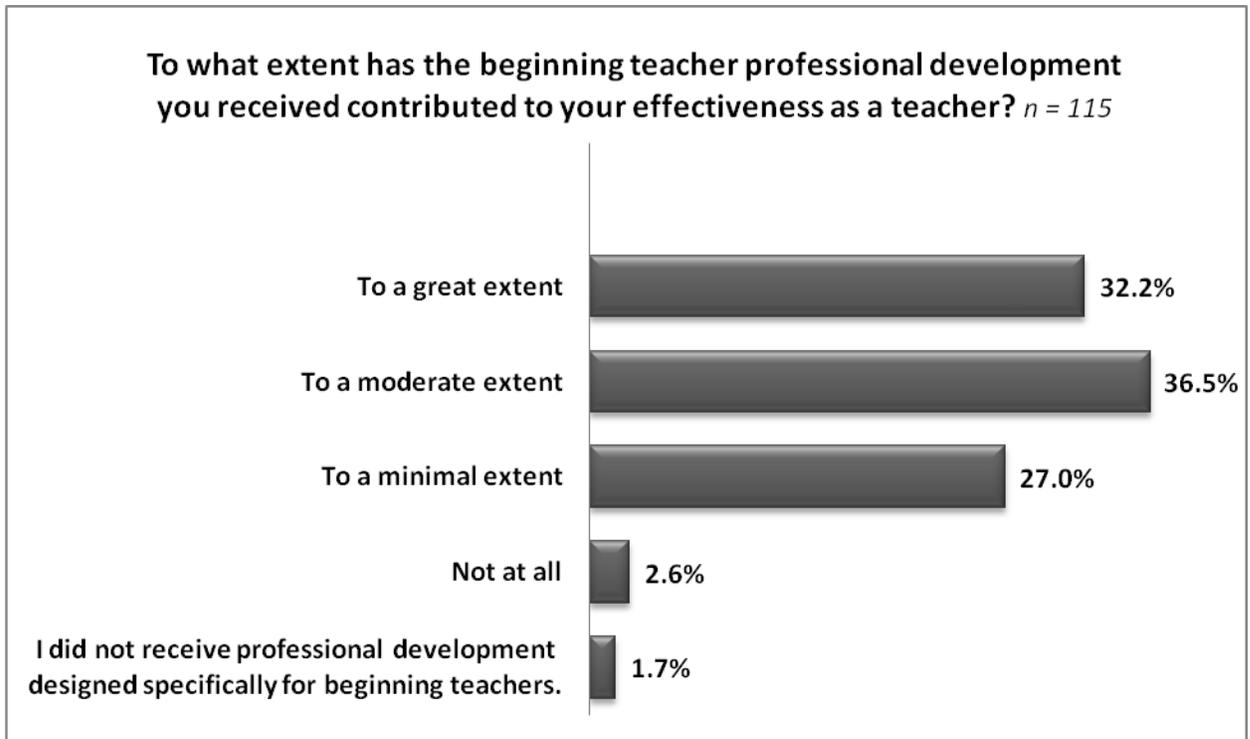
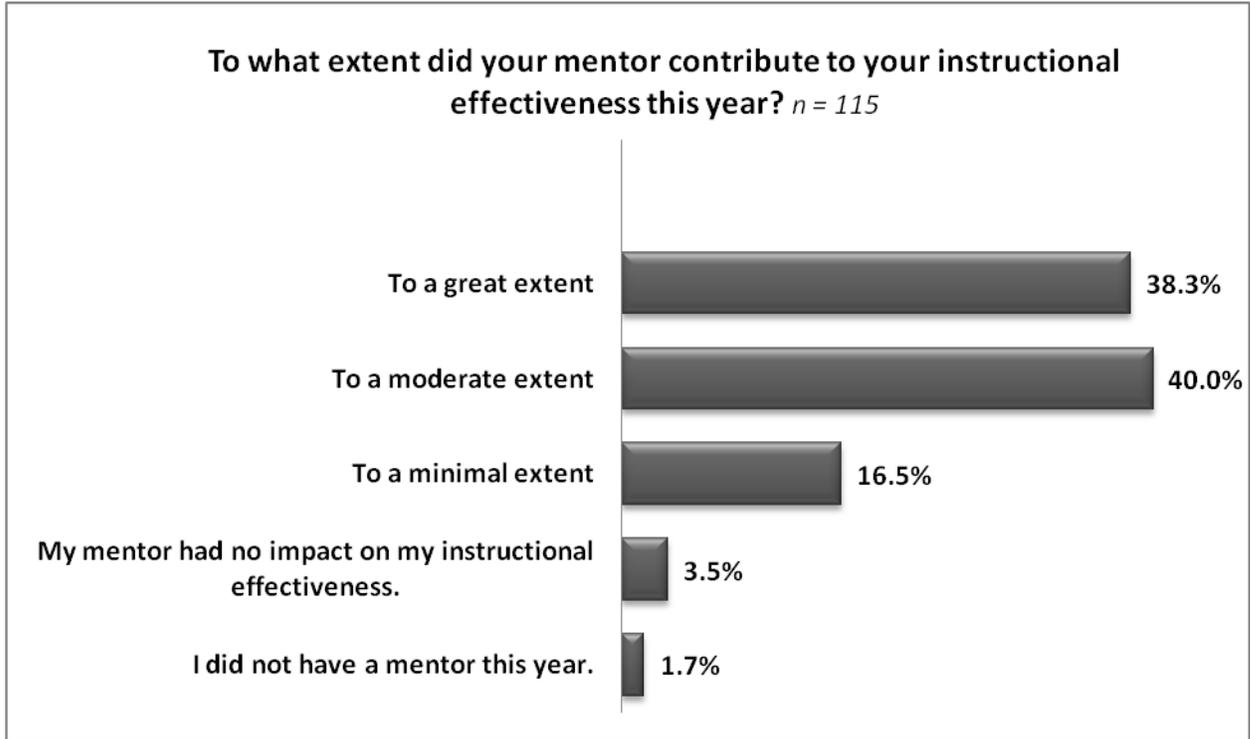
End-of-Year Survey Responses

The following charts represent data collected from surveys of first year teachers and second year teachers pursuant to their participation in BEST grantee induction and mentoring programs during the 2009-10 academic year.

First Year Teachers



Second Year Teachers



VII. Evidence of Impact: Retention

On October 1, 2010, BEST grantee districts reported an overall in-district retention rate of 89.9 percent for all first and second year teachers supported by BEST in 2009-10. A full 84 percent are teaching in the same school in the same district.

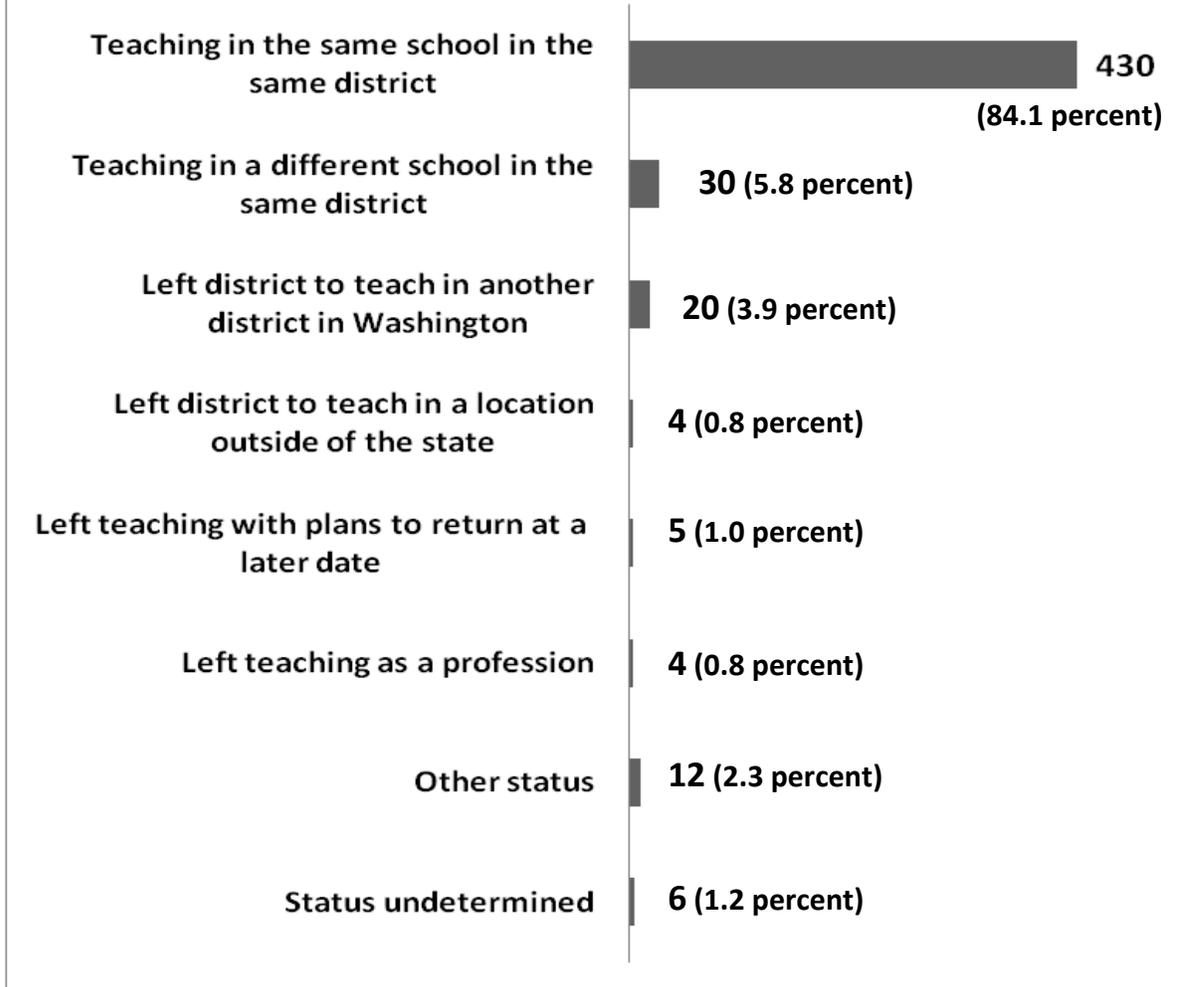
Though beginning teachers are less likely to leave their positions in the current economy, the data collected by BEST are significant because they indicate that novices are still at work in Washington schools in large numbers. Even though they are most vulnerable to workforce reductions, they are continuing in their positions from year to year in high percentages.

Research indicates that retaining effective teachers *at the school level* from year to year is essential to the effectiveness of school improvement and reform efforts. According to the 2005 study by University of Washington, it is just as disruptive for a teacher to move to a new school within the same district as it is to lose a teacher from the profession. “Teacher movers” are as great a concern as “teacher leavers.” The constant churn that some schools experience – often schools of poverty – makes it difficult for these schools to implement a coherent, multi-year improvement plan, as much of the expertise developed over the year walks out the door each spring (Plecki, et. al.).

It is important to note that 100 percent retention is not the goal. Movement across professions is expected as individuals match their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and interests with well-chosen career paths. Some individuals will decide to leave for better-suited professions; others will not be rehired by districts due to performance concerns. Some attrition for a variety of causes is expected and healthy. The intent of BEST is to keep the most promising, proficient, committed novices teaching in Washington’s public schools.

BEST grantee districts have established baseline retention data for each of their schools and will continue to monitor program effects in stemming movement between schools and attrition from education as a profession.

Current Year Retention Status of All First and Second Year Teachers Supported by BEST in 2009-10



See Appendix for retention data by district.

Grandview School District

(3,532 students; 77.6 percent FRPM; 29.5 Transitional Bilingual)

“We have retained all but 2 (out of 16) first and second year teachers in the district. One second year teacher accepted a position in a neighboring district. The other 2nd year teacher has decided to leave education and pursue a business opportunity with her new spouse. Normally, we would retain about 70 percent of the staff that we hire in their first two years of employment. This is a positive trend.”

VIII. Professional Development for Instructional Mentors

Regionally based professional development provides access to districts of all sizes to on-going, effective training for instructional mentors. OSPI Mentor Academies I and II, Mentor Tune-Up, High Performance Mentoring Series, and OSPI Leadership Roundtable Network focus on mentor acquisition of the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to help new teachers become as effective as possible as early as possible in their careers. Since mentor roles are often combined with other instructional leadership roles, these trainings are open to all those serving as instructional growth agents for beginning educators – instructional mentors, content coaches, principals, administrators, and university faculty.

OSPI Mentor Academy I

Just as the quality of instruction that students receive has a tremendous impact on their performance, the quality of mentoring that new teachers receive can significantly influence their development. Initially developed by the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) and continued by BEST, OSPI continues to offer the Mentor Academy as a highly regarded, four-day institute for individuals serving as instructional growth agents for beginning educators. Topics addressed include:

- **Coaching, Collaborating, and Consulting in Learning-Focused Conversations**
Mentoring Matters provides the foundation for skill development in the OSPI Mentor Academy Series. Developed by Laura Lipton, Ph.D., and Bruce Wellman, this adaptation of Cognitive Coaching is specifically geared toward mentoring novice teachers who do not yet have a large repertoire of skills on which to draw.
- **Mentoring for Cultural Competence**
This session focuses on mentor development of effective strategies for assisting new teachers in working with racially and culturally diverse populations. Competencies addressed are aligned with standards for Professional Certification.
- **Classroom-Based Assessment**
In addition to reviewing their own classroom assessment practices and identifying other possible tools, participants learn to assist new teachers in using a variety of assessments – informal checks for understanding to formal classroom assessments. Mentors are also introduced to various protocols for analyzing student work and evidence of learning with new teachers to improve differentiation of instruction.
- **Mentor Tools**
Mentors learn strategies for conducting formal and informal observations, for collecting data, and for providing formative feedback to catalyze teacher growth. They also learn methods for assisting their protégés' with the development and implementation of Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) aligned with standards for Professional Certification.

- **Confidentiality and the Washington Code of Professional Conduct**
Mentors review the Washington Code of Professional Conduct and the requirement for mentor-mentee confidentiality. Professional ethics, mentor responsibilities, and implications for support versus evaluation are discussed.
- **Classroom Management for Teaching and Learning**
This session focuses on helping mentors articulate their own effective management practices, learn what to look for in a new teacher’s classroom, and collaborate with new teachers on the development of successful management strategies.
- **Research-Based Elements of Effective Induction**

OSPI Mentor Academy II: Learning-Focused Conversations

This two-day follow-up to Mentor Academy I further develops skills for learning-focused conversations and gives mentors an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.

OSPI Mentor Academy III

These one-day refresher sessions are designed as “tune-ups” which allow experienced mentors to practice and refine their coaching, collaborating, and consulting skills.

High Performance Mentoring: Cultural Competence

As with teaching, becoming culturally competent is a developmental process. The High Performance Mentoring Series is designed to challenge experienced mentors with rigorous content. This strand focuses on development of the characteristics – the knowledge, skills, and dispositions – of effective instructional mentors of novices and experienced peers in developing cultural competence to support student learning. Emphasis is on acquisition of skills and strategies to effectively guide the development of cultural competence in classroom practice.

High Performance Mentoring: Using Data as a Catalyst for Teacher Growth

Mentors learn to use data gleaned from direct observations and evidence of student learning to promote new teacher growth in instruction. As with HPM: Cultural Competence, this course is designed to meet the needs of experienced mentors who are ready for the increased rigor and challenge of further refinement of their consulting-collaborating-coaching skill set.

CSTP-OSPI Mentor/Coach Symposium

This annual symposium, now in its fourth year, is sponsored each fall in November through a joint partnership between OSPI and the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP). It brings together education professionals interested in supporting new teachers and their more experienced colleagues in increasing their effectiveness in the classroom.

The 2010 pre-symposium and learning strands include:

- **Building an Even More Thought-full Learning Community with Habits of Mind**
Presenter and Keynote Speaker: Art Costa, Ed. D., Author; Emeritus Professor of Education, California State University, Sacramento; and Co-founder of the Institute for Intelligent Behavior
- **Data Driven Team Meetings: A Model for Developing Collaborative, Student-Focused Action Plans**
Presenters: Martha Teigen, Co-Director, Highline Foundations for Literacy, Puget Sound ESD; Pamela Cavenee, Cavenee Consultant Services ; Shelby Skaanes, SJS Educational Consulting
- **Effective Coaching: How Do We Know?**
Presenters: Heather Rader, 2010 Regional Teacher of the Year, Elementary Instructional Specialist, North Thurston Public Schools; Megan Conklin, NBCT, Secondary Instructional Specialist, North Thurston Public Schools
- **Effective Strategies for Supporting the Beginning Special Education Teacher**
Presenters: Karen Mataya, Special Education Facilitator, Renton School District; Nora Starosky, Full-time release Mentor, New Teacher Support Program, Lake Washington School District
- **Habits of Mind and Science College Readiness Standards: Critical tools in the Kit for Effective Mentoring and Coaching of Teachers of Science**
Presenters: Dr. George Nelson, Director, Science Mathematics and Technology Education, Western Washington University; Dr. Daniel Hanley, Director, Center for Educational Research and Evaluation Services, Western Washington University
- **Leading with Courage and Composure**
Presenters: Margaret Nugent, Coordinator and Facilitator Trainer, OSPI Leadership Roundtable Network; Francine Oishi, Beginning Teacher Assistance Program Mentor and Coordinator, Federal Way Public Schools
- **Mathematics Coach: Leading for Learning**
Presenter: Kristine Lindeblad, Math Director, Riverpoint Math Project, WSU, Spokane
- **Using Peer Learning Labs for Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development**
Presenters: Jennifer Chase, NBCT, Science Instructional Coach, Shaw Middle School, Spokane Public Schools; Sue Rees, NBCT, Math Instructional Coach, Shaw Middle School, Spokane Public Schools

OSPI Leadership Roundtable Network

Regional Leadership Roundtables provide a continuing form of specialized professional development for instructional mentors, coaches, district staff developers, principals, university faculty and others serving as growth agents for early career teachers. Regional cohorts are supported by OSPI-trained facilitators and access to a library of print and electronic resources, including research articles, professional development kits, book study materials, observation tools and protocols, etc. The following Roundtables have been established for the 2010-11 school year:

- **Northeast Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 101), Spokane**
Linda Prato and Debbie Lahue, Co-Facilitators
- **South Central Washington Leadership Roundtable (Lower Valley, ESD 105), Toppenish/Grandview**
Barbara Moses, Facilitator
- **South Central Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 105), Yakima**
Sandy Jennings, Facilitator
- **Southwest Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 112), Vancouver**
Sheila Stuhlsatz, Facilitator
- **Puget Sound Leadership Roundtable (ESD 121), Federal Way**
Francine Oishi and Marcy Yoshida, Co-Facilitators
- **Southeast Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 123), Pasco**
Jamie Bacon, Facilitator
- **North Central Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 171), Moses Lake**
Lynn Frey, NBCT, Facilitator
- **Northwest Washington Leadership Roundtable (ESD 189), Bellingham**
Paul Spring, Facilitator

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program Rules Advisory Committee

The legislature also required new rules for beginning educator support which are currently in the process of adoption. Advisors to this work include:

Esther Baker

Director of Assessments
Professional Educator Standards Board

Jane Chadsey

Director of Teaching and Learning
Renton School District

John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas

Director of Equity and Civil Rights
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Linda Foster

Program Supervisor
Early Career Educator Development
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Jeanne Harmon

Executive Director
Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession

Erin Jones

Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Barbara Lawson

Education Consultant/Mentoring Matters Trainer
Director of Professional Development (retired)
Washington Education Association

Nasue Nishida

Policy Director
Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession

Margaret Nugent

Education Consultant
Mentor Teacher (retired)
Peninsula School District

Additional BEST Resources for Districts and Mentors

- **BEST Resources Online**

Beginning Educator Support Team program resources are available online at on the OSPI website at www.k12.wa.us/BEST to meet the unique needs of mentors, beginning teachers, principals, and induction program administrators.

- **Professional Library for Roundtable Facilitators and Program Administrators**

To support induction program needs statewide, an array of resources – current texts, professional development kits on topics relevant to beginning teachers and mentors, observation tools, DVDs, etc. – are available for check-out by district program administrators, staff development specialists, and regional facilitators of OSPI Leadership Roundtable Network cohorts.

IX. Recommendations

1. Include beginning educator support for first and second year teachers in the state definition of Basic Education.

If the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve is the quality of the teacher in the classroom – as copious research demonstrates – then few things are more basic to Basic Education than development of a differentiated career continuum of teacher assessment integrated with adequate assistance. A key leverage point along this continuum is support for novices – assistance which moves them beyond mere survival to positive impacts on student learning. Investing in beginning educators helps them become as effective as possible as early as possible and continues to pay dividends over the course of their careers. The first years of a beginning teacher’s career are highly formative. An investment in first and second year teacher development affects the value-added trajectory of the teacher’s career and his or her impact on student learning for the next 25 to 30 years. New teacher induction has been funded by state budget proviso since 1987. It is time to recognize the integral nature of differentiated support for beginners in the fabric of K–12 education by including induction and mentoring for first and second year teachers in the definition of Basic Education.

2. Restore funding for BEST in the 2013-15 Biennium and expand the program

Funding for the BEST program was eliminated in the FY 11 Supplemental Budget passed by the Legislature in December 2010. Once revenues increase, restoring funding for the BEST program should be considered a high priority. A recommended phase in schedule follows:

- a. Restore funding for the original BEST grantee districts.** This maintains previously developed capacities.

b. Phase in funding for all first year teachers working in high needs districts. This funding provides assistance for novices in schools of poverty which experience the highest rates of new teacher turnover and, therefore, the most disruption to the learning environment.

c. Phase in funding for all first year teachers in districts statewide and then add funding for all second year teachers. This funding addresses the inequitable landscape, to this point, of “haves” and “have nots” – novices who begin their careers in funded districts capable of providing support versus those who do not. Prior to the economic downturn, the Quality Education Council recommended phased-in funding for all first year teachers statewide beginning in FY 2011, and adding all second year teachers in FY 2012. State coffers clearly will not allow increased expenditures at this time.

3. Explore program efficiencies which might be achieved through the use of technology.

It is clear from research that effective forms of induction and mentoring support rely on face-to-face relationships. In many regionally isolated areas of the state, however, and in small districts with no role-alike peers, online resources can help respond to the unique needs of new teachers across the miles. It is not yet clear to what extent technological forms of assistance can be successfully implemented to accelerate instructional growth or retain a teacher working in a high needs area.

4. Establish standards and a process for Mentor Certification.

The focus would be acquisition and evidence-based demonstration of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required for positively impacting the instructional practices of beginning teachers. Mentor certification would develop instructional leadership and provide an alternative to the principalship for experienced educators interested in pursuing leadership roles. Alternative pathways for service in this capacity also are needed to support a differentiated system of compensation – one which recognizes the value-added contributions of teachers who develop unique knowledge and skill sets and assume higher levels of responsibility.

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